



United States Fish & Wildlife Service

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS ADDRESS - SEE MESSAGE FOR CONTACT INFO!

10/23/2003

Memorandum

From AD - Budg, Planning & Hum Res
Subject Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season

The TSP Open Season begins October 15, 2003 and ends December 31, 2003. During this open season employees may 1) begin contributing to the TSP and, 2) change the amount of their TSP contributions.

What are the changes this open season?

- **Contribution amount for FERS and CSRS Employees** - FERS employees can elect to contribute up to 14% of their basic pay. CSRS employees have the option of electing a contribution amount not to exceed 9% of their basic pay up to the IRS limit.
- **Elective Deferral Amount** - The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will increase the elective deferral to \$13,000 in 2004. In addition to TSP, this also includes other tax-deferred plans such as, 401K, 403B and 457 plans.

FERS employees with an annual salary over \$92,000, should keep the annual contribution limit in mind when deciding how much to contribute to their TSP account each pay period. Reaching the annual limit prior to the end of the tax year will result in the loss of your matching contribution. For more information, please see the TSP Fact Sheet, Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals at <http://www.tsp.gov/forms/ocfs91-13.pdf>. The TSP Fact Sheet will fully explain how to make the maximum Employee Contribution and still receive the maximum Agency Matching Contributions for the year.

How do I make a contribution election? Contribution elections or changes must be made via Employee Express at <http://www.employeeexpress.gov> or via telephone at 800-827-6254 or 478-757-3080. You will need your PIN (Personal Identification Number). If you need assistance with Employee Express, please contact the help desk at 478-757-3030. **Employee Express can only be used to begin participation in TSP and change contribution percentages. Allocation changes (changing the percentage amount among the five funds) must be made via the TSP website at <http://www.tsp.gov> or by completing and submitting Form TSP-50 to the TSP Service Office.**

Newly hired employees will receive an Employee Express PIN within two weeks from the date

of their appointment. However, access to Employee Express will not be available for approximately three weeks after the date of appointment.

When am I eligible for the agency (1%) contribution? If you are a newly hired FERS employee your eligibility date is as follows:

<u>Date Hired</u>	<u>Eligibility Date</u>
December 1, 2002 – May 31, 2003	December 14, 2003
June 1, 2003 – November 30, 2003	June 13, 2004
December 31, 2003 – May 31, 2004	December 12, 2004

NOTE: Your Agency (1%) Contributions will be automatically invested in the Government Securities Investment “G” Fund until you make a contribution allocation via the TSP website, the ThriftLine or by sending Form TSP-50.

What if I am already contributing? If you are a FERS employee and already contributing, the agency will match your contributions dollar-for-dollar on the first 3% you contribute each pay period, and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2% you contribute. Amounts you contribute above 5% are not matched.

What is the effective date of my election? Open Season elections are effective as follows:

<u>From/To</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
October 15, 2003 – December 13, 2003	December 14, 2003
December 14, 2003 – December 27, 2003	December 28, 2003
December 28, 2003 – December 31, 2003	January 11, 2004

How do I stop my contributions? You can stop contributing your own money at any time by accessing your TSP account via Employee Express. Your contributions will stop at the end of the pay period. However, the effective date will be the first day of the pay period following the date of cancellation.

When can I begin contributing again? If you stop contributing during open season, you must wait until the next open season to start again. If you stop outside of an open season, you must wait until the second open season after you stop before you can contribute again. **If you are a FERS employee, your Agency (1%) Contributions will continue and will be invested according to your last contribution allocation on file. Even if you are not contributing, you can change the way your future Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions are invested. Make your contribution allocation via the TSP website, the ThriftLine or Form TSP-50 at any time. Agency Matching Contributions will end when your contributions end.**

How do I make an investment election? You may invest in any of the five TSP investment funds. To change the investment of future contributions to your TSP account, you must request a **contribution allocation**. You may request a contribution allocation at anytime. To allocate

your contributions among the five funds or make an interfund transfer, you must use the TSP website, the ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777, or Form TSP-50 (Investment Allocation). Form TSP-50 is available in the Headquarters Human Resources Office. **Note: If you complete Form TSP-50, you must forward it directly to the TSP Service Office, National Finance Center (NFC) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Do not submit it to the Headquarters Human Resources Office. Agencies can no longer process contribution allocations or interfund transfers.**

If you use the TSP website or ThriftLine, you must have your TSP PIN number and social security number. If you do not know or have your TSP PIN number, you may obtain it by calling the ThriftLine or requesting it via the TSP website.

How do I change the investment of money already in my account? To request an interfund transfer, use the TSP website or the ThriftLine, or submit Form TSP-50, Investment Allocation, ([Form TSP-50 is not available on the website](#)), to the TSP Service Office. **Do not submit Form TSP-50 to the Headquarters Human Resources Office.**

When will my interfund transfer be effective? If you request an interfund transfer on the TSP website or the ThriftLine before 11:00 a.m., central time, your request should be processed and posted to your account at the close of business on that day. Requests made after 11:00 a.m., central time, will be processed and posted to your account at the close of business on the following business day. If you use Form TSP-50, your request will generally be processed and posted to your account within two business days after receipt by the TSP Service Office.

How will I know the result of an interfund transfer request? After your transfer has been made, the TSP record keeper will send a confirmation of the interfund transfer. This confirmation will show the percentage and dollar distribution of your account balance in each of the five funds both before and after the transfer. The after-transfer percentages on your confirmation notice should be the same as those you requested on the TSP website, the ThriftLine, or Form TSP-50. Once you receive confirmation of your interfund transfer, you must report any errors to the TSP Service Office within 30 days of receipt of the written notice.

Can I cancel or change an interfund transfer request? Yes. You can use the TSP website, the ThriftLine, or Form TSP-50 to change a pending interfund transfer request. The change must be made by 11:00 a.m., central time cutoff on the date the request is being processed. After 11:00 a.m. central time, you can submit a new request that will generally be effective within two business days.

Remember: TSP open season changes and elections should be made via Employee Express. Employee Express will be available to make TSP changes on October 15 through December 31, 2003. To allocate your contributions, you must do so via the TSP website, the ThriftLine or submit Form TSP-50 to the NFC.

Where can I find additional information? Details are available in the handbook “Summary of Thrift Savings Plan” through the TSP website or call the Headquarters Human Resources Office at (703) 358-1743.

Our mission is, working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.